

February 9, 2005

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PSC TO CONDUCT TWO COMMUNICATIONS HEARINGS ON MARCH 9

LINCOLN – The Nebraska Public Service Commission will conduct two public hearings on telecommunications issues on March 9 via video conferencing at its offices in Lincoln and the Hastings Public Library.

Commission Chair Jerry Vap of McCook will preside at a 10 a.m. hearing to determine the surcharge for the fiscal year beginning July 1 for the statewide Telecommunications Relay System. The system provides telephone services for speech and hearing impaired individuals.

The current surcharge on all telephone monthly bills is seven cents. In addition to providing the relay service, which features relay operators providing a connection between individuals with impairments with other callers, the surcharge also funds the Equipment Distribution Program to provide the specialized equipment needed for impaired persons to participate in the relay system.

The Relay Advisory Committee, a panel of Nebraskans, will make a recommendation to the Commission for the amount of the surcharge for the next fiscal year. Commissioner Vap is the Commission's representative on the Relay Advisory Committee.

At 10:30 a.m., the Commission will hear testimony on the application by United Way of the Midlands of Omaha to establish 2-1-1 dialing for health and human services referrals for Adams, Clay, Nuckolls, and Webster Counties in south central Nebraska.

The three-digit dialing program allows callers seeking assistance with human services programs to access United Way's First Call for Help without dialing a seven or 10-digit telephone number.

Commissioner Rod Johnson of Sutton will chair the hearing from the Hastings location. The Hastings videoconference facility is on the second floor of the Hastings Public Library at 517 West Fourth. The Lincoln site is the Public Service Commission Library on the third floor of the Atrium at 1200 N Street.

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